GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:40
ANSWERED ON:25.07.2005
REVAMPING OF PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM
Bansal Shri Pawan Kumar

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of families identified as living below poverty line in the country for providing foodgrains under Public Distribution System;

(b) whether a large number of people living below poverty line do not have access to Public Distribution System;

(c) if so, whether there is any proposal to revamp the Public Distribution System in order to cover all the poor families to ensure a hunger-free life to all the citizens; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and by when it is likely to be implemented?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION(DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH)

(a) & (b): Under the Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS), foodgrains are allocated to the State Governments/UTs for an estimated number of 6.52 crore BPL families (including 2.5 crore AAY families) which is based on the poverty ratio of the Planning Commission for 1993-94 and projected population of the Registrar General of India as on 1.3.2000. Against the estimated number of 6.5 crore the States/UTs have identified more than 8 crore BPL families and issued them Ration Cards. All the Ration Card holders have access to the Public Distribution System.

(c) & (d): Streamlining of Public Distribution System (PDS) with a view to make it more effective and accountable is an ongoing process. Government reviews functioning of the PDS to make it more responsive. To ensure food security for all and to improve the Public Distribution System (PDS) for the benefit of the poorest of the poor from amongst the BPL families, the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) was commenced in December, 2000 to provide foodgrains at highly subsidized rates of Rs.2/- per kg. for wheat and Rs.3/- per kg. for rice. The AAY has been expanded to cover 2.5 crore families. Instructions have been issued to include the deserving persons left out of AAY, and for inclusion of migrant labour and urban destitutes to ensure hunger free life to all citizens.